

**MADISON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
APRIL 30, 2007**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Lane Adamson, Pat Bradley, Ann Schwend, John Lounsbury, Dorothy Davis, Kathy Looney, Dave Maddison, Bill Olson, Eileen Pearce and Laurie Schmidt.

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Ed Ruppel.

OTHERS PRESENT: Barb Cestero, Scott Christensen, Bob Bayley, Dave Bricker, Cindy Owings, County Commissioner Lewis Stahl, Rebecca Ramsey, Kevin Germain, Jessi Fanelli, Don Bowen, John LaFave, Cam Carsarphen, Stephanie Becker, Jennifer Boyer and Planning staff.

MOTION: To approve the minutes of the April 2, 2007 meeting as corrected and the minutes of the April 17, 2007 work session as presented. Moved by: Laurie Schmidt and seconded by Kathy Looney. All voted aye.

President's Comments: (Done later in of the meeting)

Public Comment: None

Presentation and Discussion of Upcoming Gallatin-Madison County Groundwater Characterization Study – Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology Staff

John LaFave and Cam Carsarphen presented the Board with maps and LaFave gave the oral presentation on the Characterization Study.

Points that were covered include:

- "The science of hydrology would be relatively simple if water were unable to penetrate below the earth's surface."
- Water is constantly in motion.
- Groundwater occurs in unconfined or confined areas.
- Artesian is a confined aquifer under pressure.
- Alluvial aquifers are basin fill, layers of sand, gravel and clay. They are most important in western Montana and are the most productive and most utilized. There is usually a shallow aquifer at the top and a deep aquifer at the bottom.
- Bedrock aquifers occur in fractures in the rock and don't store as much water. They are more susceptible to contamination. They have not been studied much.
- Groundwater moves from re-charge to discharge.
- The Bureau of Mines Groundwater Assessment Program entails (1) monitoring (900 wells in Montana), (2) characterization (systematic data collection) and (3) groundwater information center (data dissemination which is available on-line).
- Madison County has 200 wells in their database.
- The effects on water in-flow and out-flow are influenced by climate trends/weather cycles.
- There is a Steering Committee which decides where the studies will be done. Madison and Gallatin County studies will begin in the summer of '08.
- Water quality checks involve specific conductance, nitrate studies as well as arsenic and selenium.
- Pesticides are not looked at much and mercury is hard to test for and their lab is not set up for it.
- Gallatin and Madison County studies will cover most of the important aquifers.

- There is a need to hear from the public as to growth and water problems and any interesting geologic areas and concerns for those areas.
- Characterization steps would include: update the database, set up monitoring network, investigate possible “focus areas”, visit wells in all parts of the study area for two summers, compile new data and merge with existing data, interpret the data set, make up maps and produce the atlas.
- Biggest user in Madison County is irrigation.
- A lot of wells are impinging on bedrock aquifers.
- The bureau will not drill new wells, but will monitor existing wells.
- Irrigation canals provide a lot of water for the groundwater and when they go away with a disappearance of agriculture, some of the water in the aquifer will too.
- The biggest consumptive use in a household is watering a yard.
- The highest density of domestic wells is in the Bitterroot Valley.
- Worldwide there is a lot more water in groundwater than in surface water.
- HB 831 passed to the Governor to sign. What did it do? *It shut down any processing of groundwater use with agricultural or community systems in closed systems. Gives most people the opportunity to keep going.*
- HB 304 is to develop a water policy interim committee. *That committee will oversee work related to HB831. This will be very nice because the legislative members will learn about groundwater.*

Questions and answers from the audience and Planning Board/Staff:

- How long will you be monitoring these wells? *Forty to fifty wells will be added and monitored for 3 years.*
- It would be good to see cumulative impacts and monitoring in Big Sky. *If there is a specific area of concern, the Bureau can help find funding for exploratory wells to study. There are a number of wells in Big Sky to study.*
- Have you done studies on effects of community systems? *No.*
- The water system for the world is a closed loop. How can you focus it down? *We have interrupted the cycle by poking wells.*
- Is this program fully funded through the Legislature? *I think so.*

OLD BUSINESS

Madison Growth Solutions Process-Presentation and Discussion of Revised, Proposed Madison Valley Growth Management Action Plan

Lane Adamson presented a power point demonstration in which he touched on the following components of the Plan and its status.

This was previously recommended for approval by the Planning Board, sent to the County Commissioners who tabled it and sent it back to Madison Growth Solutions due to negative public comments concerning wording in the document. Madison Growth Solutions held an additional public forum to iron out the differences of opinion concerning the project.

- Lane showed slides of the beautiful Madison Valley which illustrated the remaining open space, ranch lands, hunting and fishing potential and use.
- He pointed out the importance of the interface between private and public lands and their uses. He reported that Madison County has more fishing accesses than any other county in Montana. It has 25 and the Madison Valley has 17 of them.
- A great deal of the spread of noxious weeds comes from fishing and fishing related activities.
- 750 people attended the 13 Madison Growth Solutions forums.

- Five main recommendations for action came out of the forums.

Lane said, "If you're not involved, you're not informed."

Doris reported that this plan now goes to the County Commissioners on Tuesday, May 8. At that time she expects they will schedule a public hearing, probably in late May.

Status of Planning Director Recruitment

Planning Board President Ann Schwend said that she was thankful that all of the members of the Planning Board were still on board after Doris's announcement of resignation as Director of Planning. She stated that she, Laurie and Lane, as well as Doris and Staci, attended a County Commission meeting to discuss the Planning Board's desire to be proactive in trying to find someone to fill Doris's position. She added that it would be very difficult to find someone to actually fill Doris's shoes. She reported that most of the Planning Board then met to discuss the job description and wage scale. The description was streamlined and some of the suggestions Doris had made regarding the job were tabled so as not to suggest too much for the Commissioners. She mentioned that the group had looked at eight other counties and their job descriptions and wage scale, which revealed that Madison County was the lowest paying. She reported that the County Commissioners had agreed to allow Doris to be involved in the selection process and had extended the cut off date for applicants to May 21. She said that the Board had discussed the idea that maybe the County Commissioners could devise a pay plan revision for all county department heads. The County Commissioners had also agreed to allow the Planning Board to be part of the selection process.

Doris reported that the County Commissioners had already received inquiries about the job. She also said that job notices had been sent out to a number of area newspapers and planning associations.

A Planning Board search committee to assist in the selection process was formed. They are: Ann Schwend, Laurie Schmidt, Bill Olson and Lane Adamson.

Questions from the audience:

- Doris, did you help write the job description and if so, will you apply for the job? *Yes and No. Nice try, Don.*
- Where is it advertised? *On the county website, Montana Association of Planners (members), Western Planning Resources, MACO newsletter, Montana Job Service, Billings Gazette, Bozeman Daily Chronicle, Helena Independent Record, Missoulian, Montana Standard, Madisonian, Sonoran Institute, High Country News, Planning Associations in Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Washington (state) and Alaska.*
- How do we contact the County Commissioners with our comments? *Write to them.*

Recent Planning Board Field Trips

Doris reported that County Commissioner Jim Hart had observed that members of the Board had conversations with other representatives of the subdivision when the developer was presenting to the group. Doris said that all should be paying attention to one thing going on, so that everyone hears the same information.

Legislative Update

Doris reported that very little was adopted regarding planning and development laws. A joint resolution passed for Interim Zoning and Land Use Planning Laws. Wildland fire concerns must be addressed in subdivision regulations and growth policies; however, as per recent case law, indoor

sprinklers cannot be required in subdivision regulations. A tract of land already created and approved for condominium use does not have to go through review again.

NEW BUSINESS

Draft Guide to Landowner-Initiated Zoning

Doris reported that there is a need to provide guidance for landowner-initiated zoning. Staci said that the law is vague and there was a need for something user friendly. Staci has drafted a preliminary guide, and copies were handed out. Staci walked the Board through the guide and described it as a work in progress. Doris pointed out the appendix which contains a zoning ordinance outline.

Planning Board Member Reports

Pat kept close track of the Legislature and reported that there seemed to a lot of pettiness and not much accomplished, resulting in the need for a special session. Special sessions cost \$38,000 per day.

Bill reported that there is a DVD now available called "Land Rich" which he hopes to share with the Board.

Planning Office Report

Staci and Doris attended the first meeting of the Bear Creek Neighborhood Plan Committee. Kathy commented that the *Building from the Best of the Rockies* is a very good publication. It profiles Madison County's *Code of the New West*, Big Hole Land Use Planning and Sun West Ranch.

Rebecca Ramsey commented that Madison County is very lucky to be ahead of the curve in planning, rather than reacting in a knee jerk fashion as in Gallatin County.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Ann Schwend, President

Marilee Foreman-Tucker, Secretary